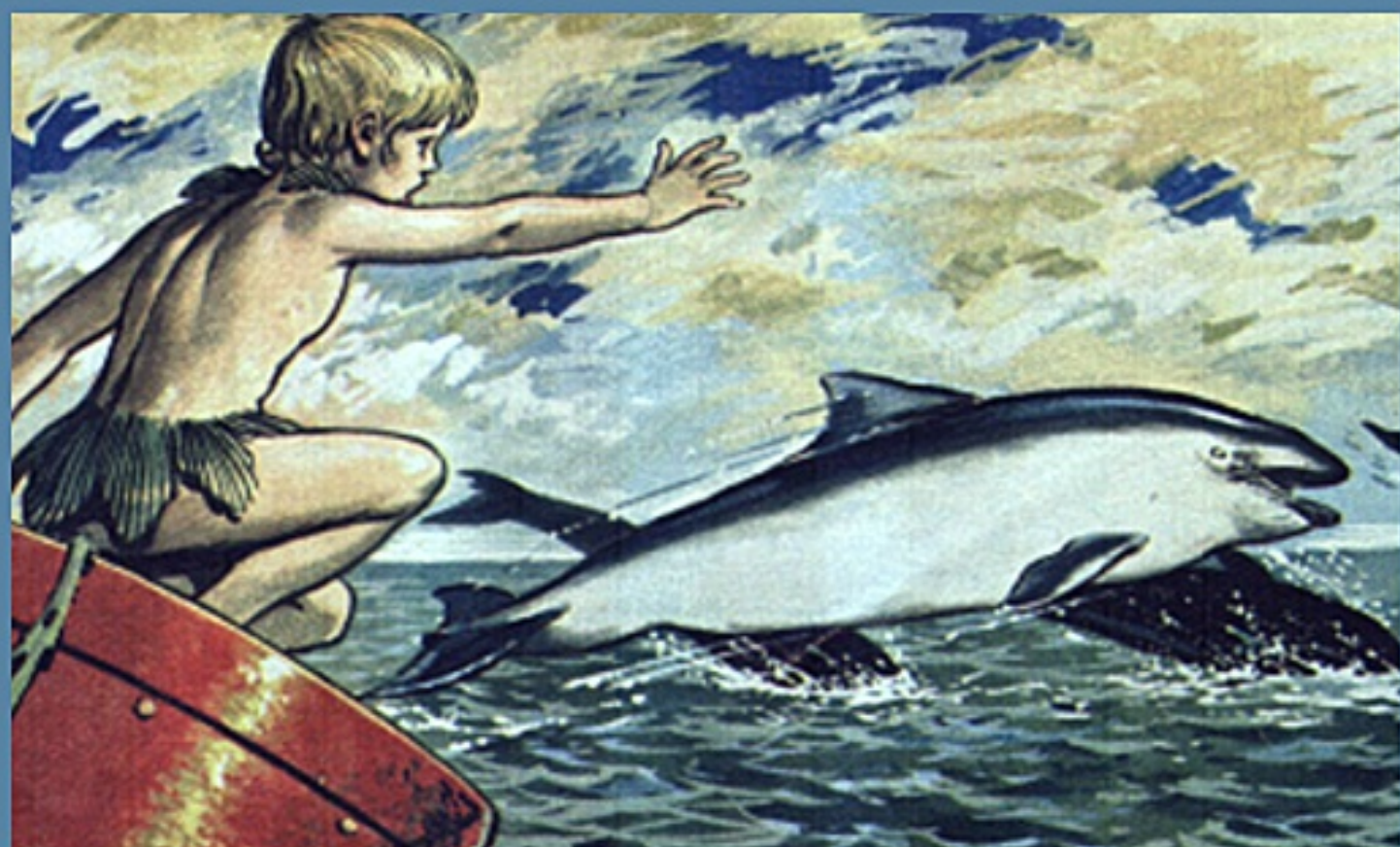


The Water Babies



UK Comics Archive



The Water Babies

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The Water Babies

Once upon a time, many years ago, there was a little chimney sweep named Tom. In the town where Tom lived there were plenty of chimneys to be swept. It was Tom's job to go climbing up inside them to loosen the soot and sweep it down for his grumpy master, Mr. Grimes, to collect.



1. Poor little Tom cried a lot when he had to climb into the dark chimneys, rubbing his knees and elbows raw and getting soot into his eyes. He also cried a lot when Mr. Grimes beat him, which was very often. He had never been taught to read or write or say his prayers and never washed himself at all. One morning, very early, Mr. Grimes set off on his donkey to sweep the chimneys of Harthover House, a large house out in the country. Tom walked behind, carrying the load of sweep's brushes.



2. Tom had never been so far out into the country before, and he stared and stared at the things around him. He longed to go into the fields and pick daisies, but Mr. Grimes would have none of that. "Hurry along, slowcoach," he growled, and puffed at his pipe. Soon they came up with a gipsy woman, limping along as if she was tired and footsore. She was a pretty woman with dark hair.

3. Mr. Grimes called out to her: "This is a hard road indeed. Will you get up, lass, and ride behind me on my donkey?" The gipsy woman shook her head. "No, thank you," she answered. "I'd sooner walk with your little lad." "Please yourself," growled Grimes. "Keep on walking if you want to." So the gipsy walked with Tom and talked to him about the sea, which Tom had never seen.



4. At last they came to a stream and Grimes stopped. Then without a word he got off his donkey and began ducking his ugly head in the stream—and very dirty he made it. Tom's eyes opened wide when he saw Mr. Grimes actually washing himself. "Why, master, I never saw you do that before," he said. "I wish I might dip my head in too, to make myself cooler."



5. "Get along with you," said Grimes, very sulky. "What do you want with washing yourself?" He made a grab at Tom to beat him, but the gipsy woman stopped him. "Are you not ashamed of yourself, Thomas Grimes?" she asked and it surprised Grimes to hear that she spoke his name. "Stop that at once. I have only one thing more to say to you both. Those that wish to be clean, clean they will be!"



6. She turned away and seemed to disappear. Mr. Grimes looked around and so did Tom, not knowing where she had gone. Grimes, however, got back on his donkey and went on towards Harthover House. As they came to it and walked up a great avenue, bordered by trees and bushes, Tom saw a deer and was puzzled by a strange murmuring noise among the flowers. "They're bees," said Grimes. "They make honey. Now hold your noise."



7. They came to the great house itself and as soon as they were inside, the work of chimney sweeping began. Tom felt his heart sink, for he knew that there would be many chimneys to do and it would take all day. "Get on with it then," growled Grimes, and he gave Tom a kick to start him climbing up the first chimney.



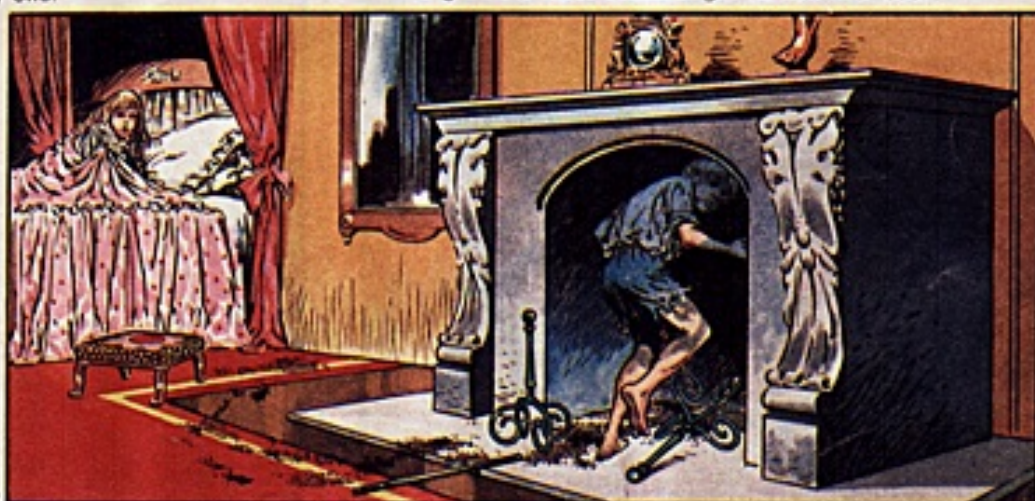
8. Tom swept many chimneys that day—so many that he lost all count of them. They were large and crooked chimneys, running into one another so that Tom lost his way in them in the pitch darkness. In the end he came down a wrong chimney and found himself standing in a room, the like of which he had never seen in his life before. It was a bedroom and indeed a very pretty one.



9. Tom looked around. In a corner of the room he noticed a washing stand with jugs and basins and soap and towels. "She must be a very dirty lady who lives in here to need so much washing," thought Tom. Then he looked towards the bed and saw the "dirty" lady and held his breath in astonishment. It was a girl—the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.



10. Still looking around, Tom suddenly caught sight of the dirtiest little boy in all the world. "How did that black-faced rascal get in here?" he asked. Then he saw that he was looking into a mirror and the dirty-faced little imp was himself.



11. Poor Tom felt so ashamed. "Am I really like that, all soot-covered and dirty?" he gasped. "I should not be here in such a lovely clean bedroom. I must get back to Mr. Grimes and never come here again." Tom darted to the big fireplace and ducked his head to go up the wide chimney. But as he did so, his foot caught one of the fire-irons and it fell with a loud clatter, which woke the beautiful girl at once. Seeing a black-faced imp and becoming frightened, she gave a loud cry. "Help! There is someone in my room!"

What will happen to Tom now? More of this lovely Water Babies story and a FREE GIFT MODEL next week

The Water Babies

Tom, the little chimney-sweep, goes to Harthover House with his bad-tempered master, Mr. Grimes. In the big old house Tom loses his way in the twisting chimneys and comes into a bedroom where a pretty girl is asleep. He tries to go back up the chimney but makes a noise and wakes her up.



1. It was the clatter of fire-irons tumbling over in the hearth that woke up the sleeping girl and she gave a loud scream. "Help! There is someone in my room—a horrid boy, all dirty and black and covered in soot," she shouted, and this brought her nurse hurrying into the room. "I'll deal with the young rascal, Ellie," said the nurse. Poor Tom was so scared that he dodged away from the fireplace and made for the window. All he wanted to do was to get out.



2. Luckily for Tom, a tall tree grew just outside the window. He was a quick-moving little lad with no fear of heights and he made a daring jump to reach the tree-trunk. He could hear the noise in the bedroom, with the old nurse screeching for help at the top of her voice. "They must not catch me," thought Tom, as he slid down the tree, not caring that the rough trunk scratched the inside of his legs. "They'd put me in prison."



3. As he reached the ground, the shouting was louder and it dinned in Tom's head. "There he is," exclaimed the gardener. "Catch him!" "Don't let him get away," said the butler. "He's got to be punished." "No, thank you," panted Tom, speeding away across the lawn. "My master, Mr. Grimes, has given me all the punishment I need in the past."



4. With tears in his eyes, Tom ran through some bushes, not really looking where he was going. He banged into a brick wall—and a brick wall makes you see all manner of beautiful stars. They go in a split second, but the pain which comes after them does not. Tom hurt his head, but he was a brave boy, so over the wall he went like squirrel. He guessed that he would find more open country outside.



5. The first thing Tom did was to take a sharp turn to the right, hoping to deceive those who were chasing him. In that the cunning little fellow succeeded very well. The shouts and sounds of running died away behind him and only a fox saw the lad hurrying through the bushes. The fox felt sorry for Tom, for it knew only too well what it was like to be hunted.



6. By now the little chimney-sweep was right away into thick heather and climbing up a slope, jogging along at a steady pace, able to stare at the new world he was in. He saw lizards and thought they were snakes that would sting him. But they were as frightened as he was and scurried away. Next, Tom had a big fright. As he hurried through the heather something went off in his face with a

most horrid noise—whirr-pool-pool-cock-cock-kick! For a moment Tom shut his eyes, thinking that the ground had blown up. When he opened his eyes, it was only an old cock pheasant, which had been lying in the heather and had jumped up with the noise of an express train when Tom nearly trod on it. Away into the sky it soared with whirring wings.



7. Tom went on and on, more slowly now, for he was stumbling over rough ground, which hurt his bare toes. He had run a long way and the sun was as hot as an oven and everything around seemed to be quivering in the glare of it. Tom's head spun round with the heat. "What a big place the world is," he thought. From the top of a cliff he could see down to a cottage in a deep, green valley below.



8. Beside the cottage ran a cool-looking stream. Tom felt hot and dizzy and knew that, somehow or other, he must get down to it. Inside his head he thought he could hear the ringing of bells and he was almost too tired to make the effort to climb down the steep slope. "There will be people down there," he thought. "Perhaps someone will give me a bite to eat."



9. At last Tom got to the bottom of the slope. The sun was burning, yet he felt chilled all over. He was quite empty and yet he felt quite sick. In answer to Tom's knock on the door came the nicest old woman he had ever seen, but she raised her hands in horror at the sight of him. "A chimney-sweep?" she said. "Away with you. I'll have no grubby sweeps here." "Water!" said Tom, quite faint. "Water?" said the woman. "There's plenty for you in the stream."



10. Tom sank down on the ground and laid back against the wall. Then he asked: "Is it Sunday? I hear church bells ringing in my head." "Bless your pretty heart," said the old lady. "You're a real sick child. Water would be bad for you in the state you're in. I know what might be best for you—a drink of good, warm milk."

See what happens to Tom, the little chimney-sweep, in next week's *Once Upon A Time* . . . and get your Free Gift.

The Water Babies



Tom, the brave little chimney-sweep, runs away when people chase him out of Harthover house, where he accidentally climbs down the wrong chimney into the bedroom of a pretty girl named Ellie. Tired out and not feeling very well, Tom comes to an old lady's cottage by a stream.

1. The old lady toddled off and brought Tom a cup of cool milk and a bit of bread. "Bless your pretty heart, you're a real sick child," she said. Tom drank the milk straight off. "Eat the bread," said the old lady. "I can't," answered Tom. "Is it Sunday? I hear the church bells ringing so in my head." "No, it isn't Sunday," said the old lady kindly. "Come with me." Tom tried to get up, but was so tired and giddy that she had to help him and lead him towards an outhouse.



2. There she laid Tom down on some soft sweet hay, put an old rug over him and said she would come to him in an hour's time. "I have a school for little children here," she explained, "but I have only one more lesson and when that is over, I will come and see if you are better." She tip-toed out, expecting Tom to fall into a deep, tired sleep.



3. But Tom was restless. He turned and tossed and felt so hot all over that he longed to get into the stream to cool himself. He did fall half asleep and dreamt that he heard the beautiful girl in the bedroom of the big house crying to him. "Oh, you're so dirty! Go and be washed and get clean!"



4. There were noises in his head and he heard church bells ringing so loudly that he was sure it must be Sunday, in spite of what the old lady had said. Tom thought that he would like to go to church, but first he must go to the river and wash the soot and dirt off himself. Poor Tom was in such a fever that he did not know what he was doing.



5. He went on to the bank of the stream, lay down on the grass and looked into the clear water. Every pebble on the bottom looked bright and clean and little fish darted about in fright at the sight of his black face. Tom dipped his hand in and found it oh, so cool. "I will be a fish. I will swim in the water. I must be clean!" he told himself. "If only I can get into the water I know that I would be happy."



6. Tom pulled off all his clothes in such haste that he tore some of them, which was easy enough with such ragged old things. He put his poor sore feet into the water and then his legs. The farther he went in, the more the church bells rang in his head. "Ah," said Tom. "I must be quick and wash myself. The bells are ringing loud now and they will stop soon and then the church door will be shut and I won't get in."



7. During all this time Tom never noticed the pretty gypsy woman, who had spoken to him and Mr. Grimes on the way to clean the chimneys at Harthover House. But she had been watching him all the time and when Tom sank down in the cool water of the stream, she smiled to herself. "Those who wish to be clean WILL be clean," she murmured, quietly.



8. Slipping off her shawl, the gypsy woman stepped down into the cool, clear water and glided gently down to the bottom. As she did so, she seemed to change in a magical sort of way. Her gypsy clothes changed to a pretty dress of long, flowing silk. Bright-coloured shells made lovely ear-rings, a necklace and bracelets.

9. The fish seemed to know her, for they were not startled as she floated through the water. "Queen of the water baby fairies, where have you been?" asked one fish. "I have been looking after little children and doing all I can to help those who cannot help themselves," she replied. "I have something to tell my water babies."



10. All the little water baby fairies of the stream came along to greet her, for she was the Queen of them all. "I have brought you a new little brother," she said. "But he must not see you or know you are here. He is a wild young thing and, until he knows our ways, you must not play with him or speak to him, or let him see you — but you must keep him from being harmed." The water baby fairies were sad but always did what they were told.



11. Tom, of course, never saw nor heard any of this. As he sank down through the water he fell fast asleep, into the quietest, sunniest, cosiest sleep that he had ever known in the whole of his life.

See what happens next week when Tom wakes up and finds that he is a Water Baby.

The Water Babies

Tom, the brave little chimney-sweep, is ill-treated by his grumpy master, Mr. Grimes, and runs away from Harthover House. He bangs his head and is so feverish that he does not really know what he is doing when he goes into a stream and sinks down into the water.



1. Now comes the most wonderful part of this wonderful story. When Tom woke up he found himself swimming about in the stream, much smaller than he had been before and having round his neck a set of gills, which he mistook for a lace frill until he pulled at it and hurt himself. He found he could breathe even in the water and made up his mind that they were part of his new self and best left alone. Tom was now amphibious, which means he could live in or out of water.



2. What was better still, was that he was clean for the first time in his life. He did not remember ever having been dirty, or of being hungry, or beaten, or being sent up dark chimneys. Tom was very happy. He had nothing to do now but enjoy himself and look at all the pretty things which are to be seen in a world of clear, cool water. But Tom, sad to say, was very naughty.

3. He came to a pool full of little trout. He began teasing them and trying to catch them, until they jumped clean out of the water in their fright. He even got on to the back of one of them and had a ride for a few moments until the frightened trout flipped him off and flashed away. He tormented the poor water creatures until they were all afraid and got out of his way.



4. He came to a caddis fly larva, a grub which hopes one day to turn into a caddis fly, but protects itself while waiting by building itself a coat made of tiny sticks, leaves and shells. Tom had never seen a caddis before, and knocked off the sticks and shells to see what was inside. What a shame! No wonder the caddis was angry.



5. Tom swam away and popped his head out of the water, where he saw a most elegant and slender creature with four great wings and big eyes that shone like ten thousand diamonds. "I'm a dragonfly," it said, whirling round the head of a young deer which had come to the water for a drink. "Please don't fly away," said Tom. "I have nobody to play with. If you stay, I promise that I will not try and catch you."



6. But the dragonfly went and it was forgotten in the next few moments, for Tom heard the strangest noise up the stream, a cooing and grunting and whining and squeaking. He looked up and there he saw a sight as strange as the noise—a great brown ball rolling over and over down the stream, seeming to be made of soft brown fur. Yet it was not a ball at all.



7. Tom took the neatest little header into the water and went to see what it was. When he came near, the ball turned out to be four or five otters, rolling, diving, twisting and wrestling in the most charming fashion that was ever seen. When the biggest of them saw Tom, she darted from the rest and cried out sharply, "Quick, children, here is something to eat."



8. Poor Tom slipped down between the water-lily roots as fast as he could. "Come away, children," said the otter in disgust, after taking a closer look at Tom. "It's not worth eating after all. It's only a nasty newt." "I am not a newt," said Tom. "Newts have tails." "I say you are a newt," snapped the mother otter. "You are not fit food for me and my children, so you may stay there till the salmon come and eat you."



9. One evening, about a week later, it grew suddenly dark. Thunder roared and lightning flashed and rain came down as though poured from buckets. Soon the stream rose, churned into foam and rushed down towards the sea, full of beetles and sticks and straws and odds and ends. Among the odds and ends was Tom.



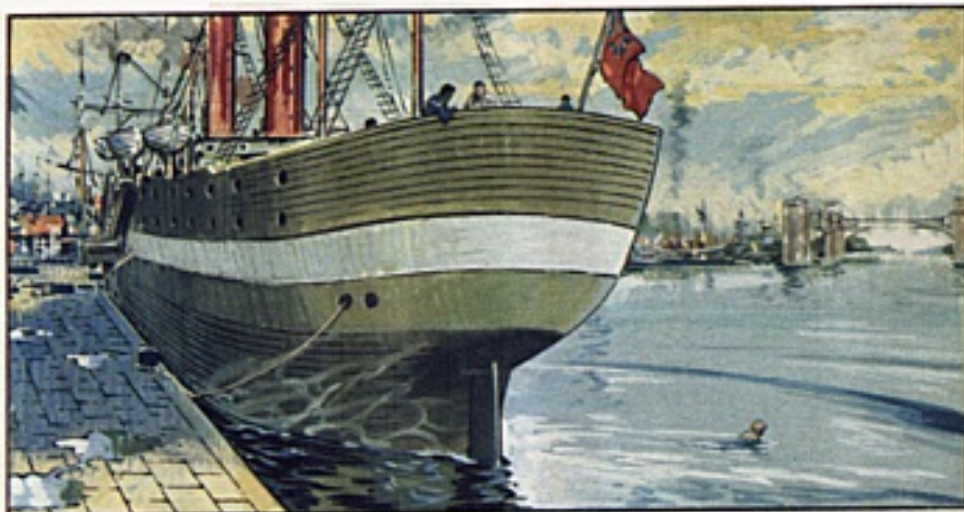
10. By the flashes of lightning, Tom saw a new sight—all the bottom of the stream alive with great eels, hurrying past him so fiercely and wildly that he was quite frightened. As they hurried past, Tom could hear them saying to each other, "We must run, we must run. Down to the sea." "Wait for me," pleaded Tom.



11. But the eels went on and, coming from the other way, Tom saw two big fish, shining silver from head to tail and with grand hooked noses. "Oh, don't hurt me," Tom cried. "Ah," said one of the salmon. "I see what you are, my little dear. I have met creatures like you before and only last night they warned us of nets placed in the river to catch us." "Then there ARE other water babies to play with," said Tom. "How wonderful!"

Will Tom find the other water babies? More of this lovely story next week.

The Water Babies



Tom, the brave little chimney-sweep, finds himself turned into a water baby. Because he is naughty, the other water babies are not allowed to play with him. Tom tries to find them and swims down a river to the sea . . .

1. Day after day Tom travelled on. He swam near ships and saw sailors on the decks, so he ducked under again, for he was terribly afraid of being caught by the men and turned into a chimney-sweep once more. What Tom did not know was that the water fairies were always near him, shutting the sailors' eyes so that they did not see him. Poor little fellow, it was a weary journey for him. More than once he longed to be back in the upper parts of the stream, playing with the trout, but he did not stop.



2. Tom had always been a brave little lad, who never knew when he was beaten. On and on he went, until he saw, a long way off, a red buoy. Tom had never been to sea before and knew nothing about it. He only knew that the water had turned salty all round him. A change came over him. He felt strong and light. The red buoy was in sight, dancing in the open sea, and to the buoy he was determined to go as fast as he could.



3. Tom did not care that the tide was against him. He passed great shoals of fish called bass and mullet, leaping and rushing after the shrimps, but he took no notice of them and they took no notice of him, for they were so busy chasing after their food. Most living things in the sea feed on other living things, you know.



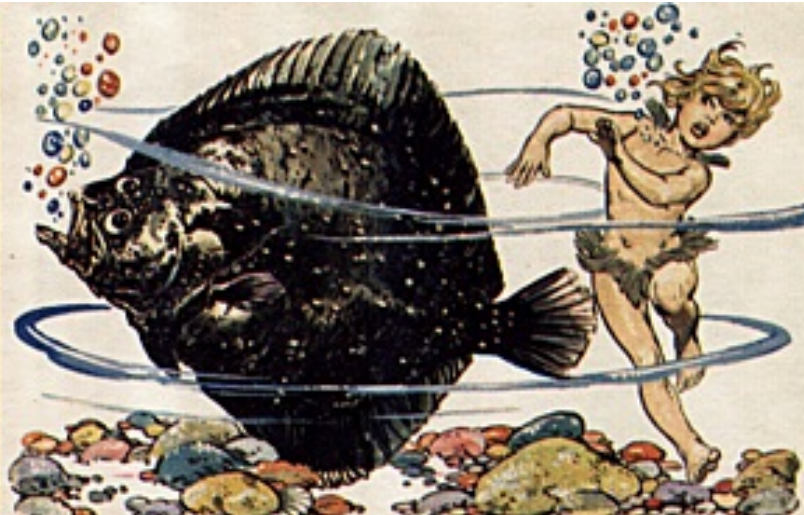
4. Once he came face to face with a great black shining seal. "How do you do, sir," said Tom. "What a beautiful place the sea is." The old seal looked at him with his soft, sleepy eyes. "Good day to you, my little man," he said. "Are you looking for your brothers and sisters? I passed them all at play outside." "Did you?" said Tom.



5. He thanked the seal very much. "Now I shall have someone to play with at last," said Tom. He swam to the buoy and got up on it, quite out of breath. He sat and looked around for water babies, but there were none to be seen. Tom stared and stared all round him. He saw seagulls hovering over him like huge white dragonflies. If only he could have seen a water baby, he would have been very, very happy.



6. After a while he jumped off the buoy and swam around in search of the water babies, but all in vain. Sometimes he thought he heard them laughing, but it was only the laughter of the rippling sea. Then sometimes he thought he saw them on the bottom, but it was only white and pink sea shells. Once, he was sure he had found one, for he saw two bright eyes peeping at him out of the sand.

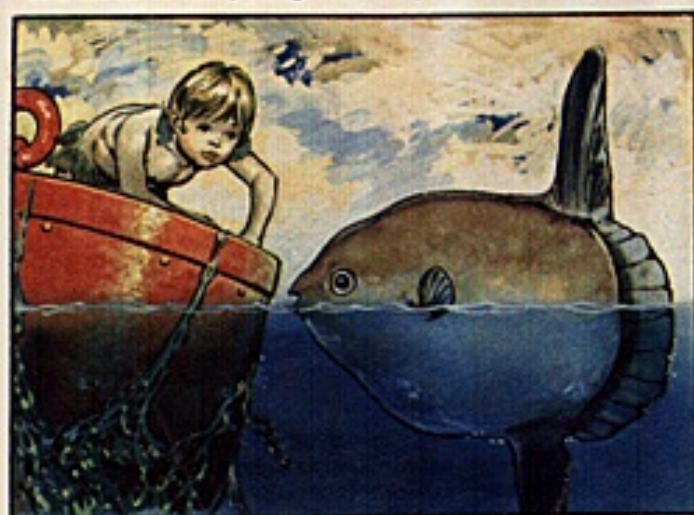


7. Tom began to scrape away the sand, saying: "Don't hide. I do want someone to play with so much." Out jumped a great flatfish and it flopped away along the bottom, almost knocking poor Tom over. "How dare you disturb me, you horrid boy?" said the fish. "I lie in the sand with only my eyes showing so that others will not see me and now you have spoilt my rest. Please go away!"

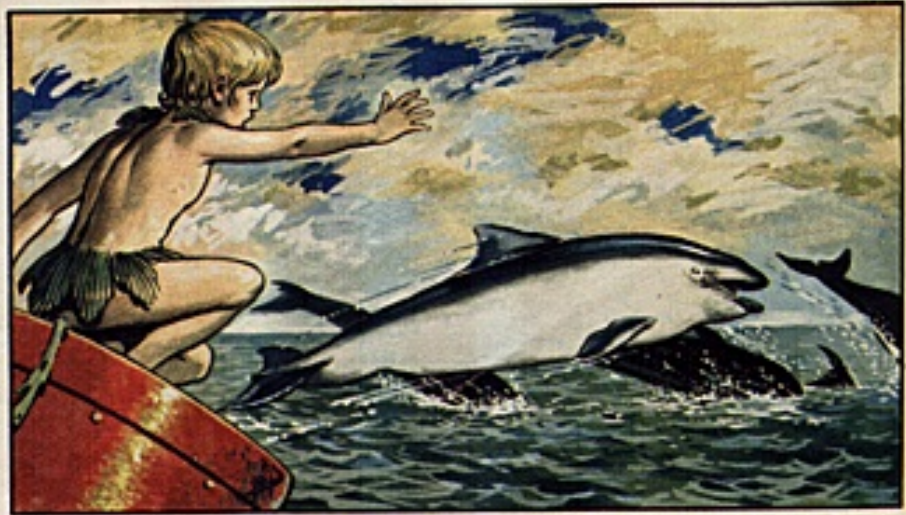


8. Poor Tom climbed back on the buoy and cried salt tears from sheer disappointment because he had found no water babies to play with. He sat upon the buoy for many long days, looking out to sea and wondering when the other water babies would come, and yet they never came. It seemed hard to him to have come all this way and faced so many dangers—and yet to find no other water babies.

9. He began to ask all the strange things which came in from the outside sea if they had seen any. Some said "Yes," and some said nothing at all. He asked the bass and mullet, but they were greedy fish and so intent on catching shrimps to eat that they did not care to answer him a word. Tom saw all these sea creatures passing by, but no water babies. He grew sadder and sadder.



10. Then one day came a great lazy sunfish and when Tom questioned him he answered in a squeaky voice, "Water babies? I'm sure I don't know. I've lost my own way. Don't talk to me." And he swam away.



11. Next there came a shoal of porpoises, rolling as they went by and all quite smooth and shiny, because the water fairies polish them every morning. Tom took courage to speak to them, but all they answered was "Hush, hush, hush," as they swished through the water. Poor Tom! He could not find a water baby.

See what happens to Tom next week in this lovely "Water Babies" story.

The Water Babies



1. Tom found a crayfish to talk to. He had never seen one before and thought it a most curious creature. He asked him about the water babies. "Yes," the crayfish told him, "I have seen them often but don't think much of them. They are rather meddlesome little creatures, always going around helping fish and shells which get into trouble. I have lived long enough to take care of myself." The crayfish was a conceited fellow, but Tom was so lonely that he talked to him for many hours a day.

Tom, the brave little chimney sweep, becomes a water baby. He swims out to sea to try and find some other water babies to play with but he does not find any. They have been told by their Fairy Queen to keep out of sight until Tom has learned not to be naughty . . .



2. About this time there happened to Tom a very strange and important adventure. You will not have forgotten the little girl in the bedroom of the big house, who was the cause of Tom being forced to run away and become a water baby. Her name was Ellie. One day she came to the shore with a very wise old professor, who knew all about the little sea-creatures and caught them in a net to take home and look at later.



3. "I like playing with children best," said Ellie, who was a little bored. "There are babies on land, so why are there no water babies?" "Because there aren't," replied the professor quite sharply. A little angry with Ellie, he groped under some weeds with his net—and caught poor Tom!



4. He lifted out the net with Tom inside it. "Dear me," gasped the professor, as he lifted Tom out of the net. "It's a pink thing and it has hands. It actually has eyes, too. It must be a cephalopod." In case you do not know, a cephalopod is the name given to such things as oysters, snails and limpets. Tom did not like to be called names like that. "No, I'm not," he cried as loud as he could.



5. "It's a water baby," said Ellie. "Water fiddlesticks, my girl," said the professor. Tom had been in a most horrible fright all the while. He was terrified that the man might put clothes on him and make a dirty little chimney sweep of him again. When the professor poked him it was more than he could bear, so he bit his finger hard. "Oh, yah!" cried the professor.



6. He let go of Tom, who dropped into the water and swam off. "It WAS a water baby and I heard it speak," said Ellie. "Oh dear, now it's gone." She tried to catch Tom, but she was too late. What was worse, as she jumped off a rock she slipped and fell some six feet. Before the professor could grab her, Ellie hit her head on a rock and lay quite still.



7. The professor picked Ellie up and tried to waken her, calling to her and crying over her, for he loved her very much. She would not waken at all, so he took her up in his arms and carried her home. The professor knew that he should have agreed with Ellie, admitting his mistake. He should have said, "Yes, Ellie, it seems that there is such a thing as a water baby."



8. Little Ellie was put to bed and they tried to make her well again, but all she did was to wake up now and then and call out about the water baby. Nobody knew what she meant. The doctors were puzzled about it, but the professor did not say, for he was too ashamed to tell. Poor Ellie! She grew paler and paler and weaker and weaker and seemed to think of nothing but water babies.

9. After a week, one moonlight night, the fairies sent for Ellie. Two of them came to the house and they flew with Ellie out of the window. Very gently they carried her over the land and sea and up through the clouds until they disappeared from sight. Nobody heard of Ellie, or saw anything of her, for a long time after that. But in the meantime, what was happening to our little Tom?



10. He came one day to a sort of wicker basket and inside it he saw his old friend the crayfish. "Have you been naughty? Have they put you in prison?" asked Tom. The crayfish told him that he had climbed in after a bit of dead fish and could not get out. Tom looked at the trap. Being a lot cleverer than the crayfish, he could see how to get him out. "Thank you," said the crayfish. "You are really most kind."



11. A few minutes later there happened a most wonderful thing. Tom had not left the crayfish for more than five minutes when he came upon a real live water baby, kneeling on the beach, doing something to a piece of rock. When it saw Tom, it said, "Why, you are a NEW water baby." "I have been looking for you so long and been so lonely," said Tom, running to it.

At last Tom has found another water baby. More of this delightful story next week.

The Water Babies

Tom, the brave little chimney-sweep, becomes a water baby. He searches the sea for other water babies, who have been told by their Fairy Queen to keep out of sight until Tom loses his rather naughty ways. When Tom is kind to a crayfish and helps it to escape from a trap he meets a water baby . . .



1. At last Tom had found a water baby. He had been searching for one for so long and had been so lonely that he could scarcely believe it. Yet there it was—a real live water baby, sitting on the white sand, very busy doing something to a little pointed rock. When it saw Tom, it looked up and smiled. "You can help me with this poor little rock," it said. "It lost its seaweed in a storm and now I must plant some more on it and make it the prettiest little rock on the sea shore."



2. When this had been done, the tide began to turn and Tom heard all the other water babies coming, laughing and singing and shouting and romping. When they reached the shore, they became very busy. "Now then," said one, "we must mend all the broken seaweed and plant all the shells again in the sand and nobody will see where the ugly storm swept in last week." The water babies come inshore after every storm to tidy up the beaches, you know.



3. Tom watched them and waited for them to notice him. When they found that he was a new water baby they hugged and kissed him, then put him in the middle and danced round him on the sand. There was nobody happier than poor Tom. They sang and shouted and the noise they made was just like rippling water. Tom felt very proud and pleased.



4. The water babies were all the little children whom the good fairies had taken, because they had been very ill or had cruel mothers and fathers, who would not look after them and see they came to no harm. "Now we must go home," they said, and they swam away under the sea, with Tom happily following behind them.



5. Do you know where the home of the water babies is? It is in a place called Saint Brandan's Isle, which stands upon pillars of rock, of many different colours. In the caves beneath the isle live the water babies and other creatures of the sea. To keep the place clean, crabs pick up all the scraps off the sand and eat them.



6. When Tom got there he found more water babies than either he, or you, could count. You might have thought that with so many friends to play with, Tom might have given up all his naughty tricks and left off teasing the poor sea-creatures, but he did not. He thought it was very funny to frighten the crabs and to make them hide in the sand with only the tips of their eyes showing.

7. Naughty little Tom was not content with spoiling the lives of the crabs. He teased the sea anemones, too. He dropped little stones into their open mouths to make them fancy that their dinner was coming, and laughed when they tossed them out, very angry and disappointed. The other children warned him, "Take care what you are doing," they said to him, "Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did is coming."



8. "Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did?" said Tom. "That's a very funny sort of name." "You must be good, or she might punish you," said the other water babies, but Tom never heeded them. He went on playing his naughty tricks, until early one Friday morning. "She's coming today," said the water babies, swimming in great excitement around Tom. "She'll be here in a few minutes and then you will meet Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did."



9. A very tremendous lady she was. When the children saw her they stood in a row, very upright indeed, just as if they were going to be examined by the inspector. She was so ugly that Tom was tempted to make faces at her, but he was a little bit too scared. Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did looked at the children and then began giving them some nice sweets.



10. She gave away sea-toffee and sea-sugarsticks and to the very best children of all she gave sea-ices, which never melt under water. Little Tom watched all these sweets being given away and hoped that his turn would come. At last it did. The lady called him up, held out something in her fingers and popped it in his mouth.



11. Lo and behold, it was a nasty hard pebble! "You are a very cruel woman," said Tom, and he began to cry. "And you a cruel boy, who puts pebbles into sea anemones' mouths to make them fancy they had caught a good dinner," she replied. "As you did to them, so I must do to you. You see, I know all about you, Tom."

Will this teach Tom not to be naughty? More of this "Water Babies" story next week.

The Water Babies

Tom, the brave little chimney sweep, becomes a water baby and after a long search he finds the home of the water babies under the sea. Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did comes to visit them. She gives the other water babies sweets, but Tom only gets a pebble to eat.



1. "You must be done by as you did," said the old lady. "You put stones into the mouths of the sea-anemones to make them think they had caught a good dinner, and that was very naughty." Tom hung down his head and got very red about the ears. "I am very ugly," Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did went on. "I am the ugliest fairy in the world and I shall always be, until people behave as they ought to. Then I shall grow as pretty as my sister, the loveliest fairy in the world. Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by."



2. Later, when it was Sunday, Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by came. She was the sweetest, kindest and most delicious person anyone could wish to see. All the water babies began dancing and clapping their hands at the sight of her. Tom stood staring at them. For the past few days he had been a good boy. He had never frightened one crab or teased the sea-anemones and was really trying to be a well-behaved little water baby.



3. The lovely fairy sat down on a rock and suddenly saw Tom and made all the others stand aside. She took Tom in her arms, kissed him and patted him. Nothing like that had ever happened to Tom in his life before. "Now," said Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by, "will you be a good boy for my sake and tease no more sea animals to please me?"



4. Tom promised and really tried to behave. Every day except on Sunday the ugly fairy, Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did came to give the water babies sweets. Tom had everything he could want—but having nothing to wish for sometimes makes people naughty. After a while this happened to little Tom. He grew so fond of sea sweets that his foolish little head could think of nothing else.

5. He was always longing for more and more. He thought of nothing else but sea bull's-eyes and sea lollipops all day and dreamt of nothing else all night. And you can perhaps guess what happened next. Tom became artful and watched the lady to see where she kept the sweets. He began hiding and sneaking and following her about, pretending to look the other way.



6. At last he found out that she kept the sweets inside a beautiful mother-of-pearl cabinet, hidden away in a deep crack in the rocks. The more he looked at it, the more he longed to go to it. He had not yet learned that it was wrong to be greedy, though when he first found the cabinet he thought of Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did and was a little afraid to open it.



7. But when he opened it and saw all the nice things inside, he thought he would taste only one, which he did. Then he thought he would eat only two and then only three—but soon he began to gobble them down so fast that he did not really taste them. And all the time Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did was watching him. "Ah, you poor little dear," she said, "You are like all the rest."



8. She said it to herself and Tom did not see or hear her. She did not fly at him or question him or frighten him. If she had, she might have tempted him to tell lies and that would have made Tom even worse. But on Sunday the other fairy came—the pretty one who was called Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by. Tom gave a shout of glee and rushed to her at once, wanting to be cuddled.



9. But when he came up, she turned away from him. "I should like to cuddle you, but I cannot," she said. "You are so prickly!" Tom looked at himself. He saw that he was covered all over with prickles. No wonder it had happened. Since eating the sweets, Tom had felt all prickly inside, with naughty tempers, so his body could not help growing prickly, too, on the outside.



10. Nobody would cuddle him now, or play with him or even look at him. What could Tom do but go away and hide in a corner and cry. He was so miserable that he told the ugly fairy about the sweets. "I forgive you," she told him. "But only you can take the prickles away."



11. "How can I do that?" Tom asked. "You must first do something very good," she answered. "Be kind to someone you don't like." Tom thought for a moment. "I don't like my old master, Mr. Grimes," he said. "But I will be kind to him. Where can I find him?" "At the Other-end-of-Nowhere—a long way away," the ugly fairy answered.

Next week in this wonderful story, Tom sets off to find the Other-end-of-Nowhere.

The Water Babies

Since becoming a water baby, Tom, the little chimney sweep, had been so naughty and greedy that he became covered in prickles. To get rid of them he decides to do a kind deed and find his cruel old master, Mr. Grimes, who has gone to the Other-end-of-Nowhere . . .

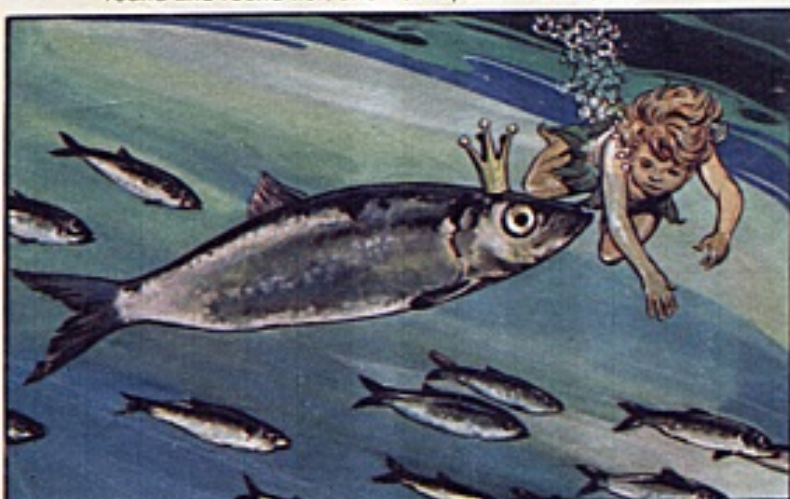


1. Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did told Tom what to do. "You must go farther than the world's end, Tom," she said. "You must go to the Shiny Wall and then to Mother Carey's Haven, where the good whales go when they die. There, Mother Carey will tell you the way to the Other-end-of-Nowhere and there you will find Mr. Grimes." "Oh dear," said Tom, "but I do not know my way to the Shiny Wall." "You must ask all the beasts in the sea and all the birds in the air," said the fairy, as Tom set off.

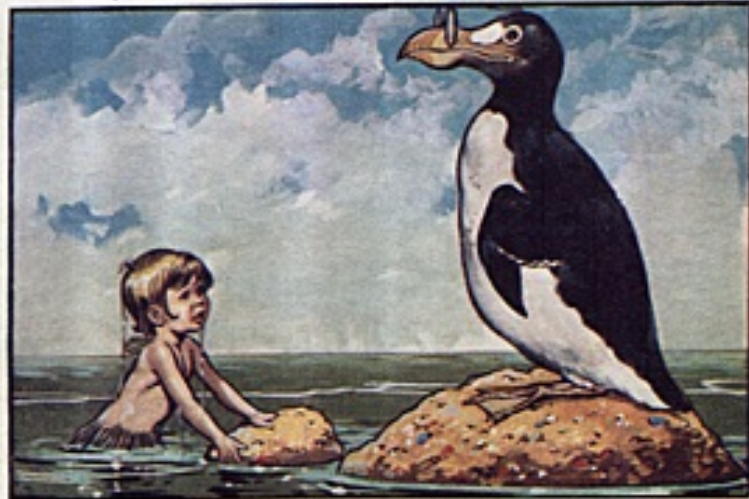


2. On his way, Tom asked all the birds of the air and the beasts in the sea, but none of them knew the way to the Shiny Wall. For why? He was still too far down South. Then he met a ship, far larger than he had ever seen—a gallant ocean steamer with a long cloud of smoke trailing behind. A school of dolphins were running races round and round her, and Tom spoke to them, too.

3. He asked them the way to the Shiny Wall, but they did not know. Tom looked up at the sailors and people on the decks of the ship and he called out to them—but they did not answer, because they could not see him. Only a few special people can see water babies even when they are there. When he got no answer Tom turned away, sad and wondering, and swam towards the North.



4. Tom continued to swim northwards, day after day, till at last he met the King of the Herrings. Tom asked him the way to the Shiny Wall and the King of the Herrings said in reply: "If I were you, young sir, I would go to the All-alone-stone and ask the Gairfowl. She knows a good deal about everything." Tom asked his way to her and the King of the Herrings told him very kindly.



5. Away went Tom for seven days and seven nights, until he came to a small piece of rock that stuck up on its own out of the huge ocean. It was the All-alone-stone and on it sat the Gairfowl, all alone. A very grand old lady she was, very much like a penguin. "Shiny Wall?" she squawked. "Oh dear, my poor old brains are getting quite puzzled. You'd better ask the birds."



6. Then a flock of petrels came along and they are Mother Carey's own chickens. They flitted along like a flock of black swallows, hopping and skipping from wave to wave. Tom called to them and asked the way to the Shiny Wall. "Shiny Wall? Come with us and we will show you," they said.



7. Tom was delighted and he swam after the petrels. "First of all we must go to Allfowlsness and wait there for the great gathering of all the seabirds on their way to their breeding-places in the Northern Isles," they told him. When Tom reached Allfowlsness, the seabirds were gathering there in tens of thousands, quacking and clucking and gabbling and chattering among themselves. "These are the fellows to show you the way to the Shiny Wall," the kind petrels said to Tom.



8. The petrels spoke to some of the biggest seagulls, who are sometimes called molly-cocks. "Come, come, you lazy greedy things," they said. "This young gentleman is going to Mother Carey and wants to know the way to the Shiny Wall." "Greedy we may be, but lazy we are not," said one great fat molly-cock. "We'll help the little lad." So the mollies, who were jolly birds, took Tom the water baby with them. Laughing and joking, they headed towards the cold North, where they would find the Shiny Wall.



9. They flew northwards for many days, to places colder than Tom had ever known before. Being a water baby, he did not feel the cold, but was frightened when he saw packs of icebergs, bunched together in the sea, groaning and growling as they knocked into each other.



10. The good molly-cock carried Tom safely over the icebergs and set him down at the foot of the Shiny Wall. It was a great wall of ice and stretched as far as Tom could see—and so high that nobody could have climbed over. "Where is the gate?" asked Tom. "I don't see it." "There isn't one," said the molly-cock.

11. "No gate?" gasped Tom in surprise. "What am I to do then? I must get to the other side of the Shiny Wall to find Mother Carey." "Then you must dive and swim under the great Shiny Wall, if you have the courage," said the molly-cock. "I have not come this far to be turned back now," said Tom, very bravely.

Will Tom get past the great Shiny Wall? More of this lovely story next week.

The Water Babies

Brave little Tom, who was once a naughty little boy who swept chimneys, becomes a water baby. To show how good he has become he sets off on a journey to the Shiny Wall, a great barrier of ice in the sea. He hopes to find the Other-end-of-Nowhere to help his cruel old master, Mr. Grimes . . .



1. There was no gate in the Shiny Wall, so Tom had to dive down to the bottom of the sea and swim under it. He swam for seven days and nights and he was not a bit frightened. Why should he be? He was a brave lad. On his way he swam through shoals of yellow shrimps that hopped and skipped about; and through a crowd of jellyfish of all the colours of the world, that neither hopped nor skipped, but only dawdled and yawned and would not get out of his way. But Tom did not mind them.

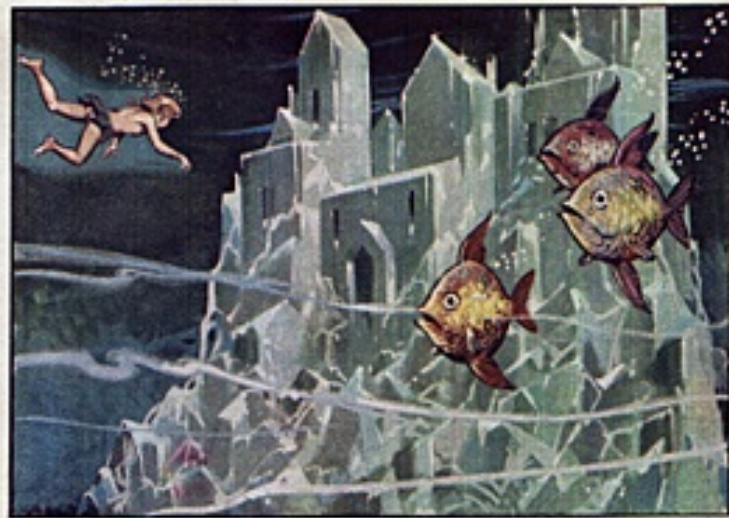


2. At last he got to the top of the sea again, to the pool where all the good whales go. A very large pool it was, miles and miles across. All round it rose cliffs of ice. These kept away the storms and clouds, keeping Mother Carey's pool calm from one year's end to another. There the good whales lay on the still sea—blue whales, fin whales and bottle-nosed whales.

3. They were happy, sleepy beasts, waiting for Mother Carey to send for them to make them out of old beasts into new. Tom swam up to the nearest whale and asked the way to Mother Carey. "There she sits, in the middle," said the whale. Tom looked, but could see nothing in the middle of the pool except one peaked iceberg. "That is where you will find her—underneath it," said the whale.



4. "What does she do down there?" Tom asked. The old whale gave a big yawn and answered: "She's busy all the year round making old beasts into new ones." "If she makes things into new," said Tom, thinking hard, "I suppose that she cuts up a great whale like you into a whole shoal of porpoises." At this remark the old whale laughed loudly. "Run along with you, boy, and find out," he chuckled.



5. Wondering what he might find, Tom swam to the iceberg and dived down beside it. As he swam towards the bottom of the sea, he was passed by a rising cloud of millions of very tiny new-born creatures, of more shapes and colours than he had ever dreamed of. They were Mother Carey's children, whom she makes out of sea water all day long.



6. Tom expected, as most people would, to find her as busy as could be, but instead of that he came upon the grandest lady he had ever seen, a white marble lady sitting on a white marble throne. She sat quite still, looking around with two blue eyes as blue as the sea itself. "It is a long time since I have seen a water baby here," she said kindly.



7. Tom told her his errand and how he had been sent to find Mr. Grimes at the Other-end-of-Nowhere. Although Mr. Grimes had treated him cruelly when he had been a chimney-sweep, Tom had a duty to be kind to him, to show that he had learned the ways of a good little boy. "You are a splendid little fellow," said Mother Carey and when she told him the way to go, Tom thanked her kindly and swam off with no more delay.



8. Tom walked for a long time along the soft ocean floor and soon became aware of a hissing and a roaring, as though all the steam engines in the world were working at once. When he came nearer to the noise the water grew boiling hot, but that did not hurt him in the least. At last Tom came very close to the Other-end-of-Nowhere. He reached a place which was called Stop. And there he stopped on the edge of a big hole.



9. It was a kind of small volcano and the steam that came out of it made the water spin round and round in a sort of whirlpool. It made gurgling noises that reminded Tom that once, when chimney-sweeping in a big house, he saw a bath emptying itself down the plughole. He let himself be carried down it, hoping for the best.



10. He went rushing and tumbling down through the great hole and when he got to the bottom of it he came safely to the shore of the Other-end-of-Nowhere. He saw before him a huge building made of brick. It reminded Tom of a prison and as he walked towards it, he had a strange fancy that he might find Mr. Grimes somewhere inside it.



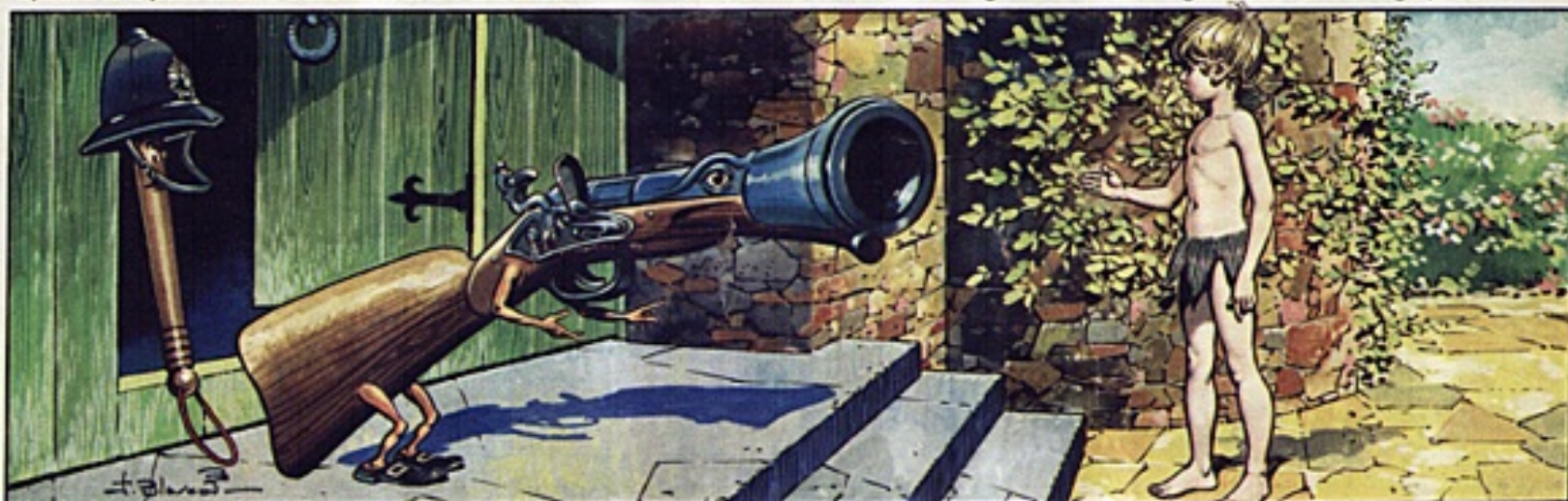
11. Boldly Tom marched towards the building when something shouted "Stop!" It was nothing more than a policeman's truncheon, running along without arms and legs. And when the truncheon asked him his business, Tom told him that he had come from Mother Carey and was looking for Mr. Grimes.

Will Tom find Mr. Grimes? More of this delightful story in Once Upon A Time next week.

The Water Babies



1. The policeman's truncheon was running along without arms or legs, but Tom was not a bit surprised. He was long past that. Since becoming a water baby he had seen many strange and wonderful sights. "I have come from Mother Carey," he told the truncheon warder. "My job is to find Mr. Grimes and make him happy." "All right, follow me," said the truncheon. "We'll see if it can be arranged." He turned and went ahead of Tom, escorting him towards the great door of the huge prison.

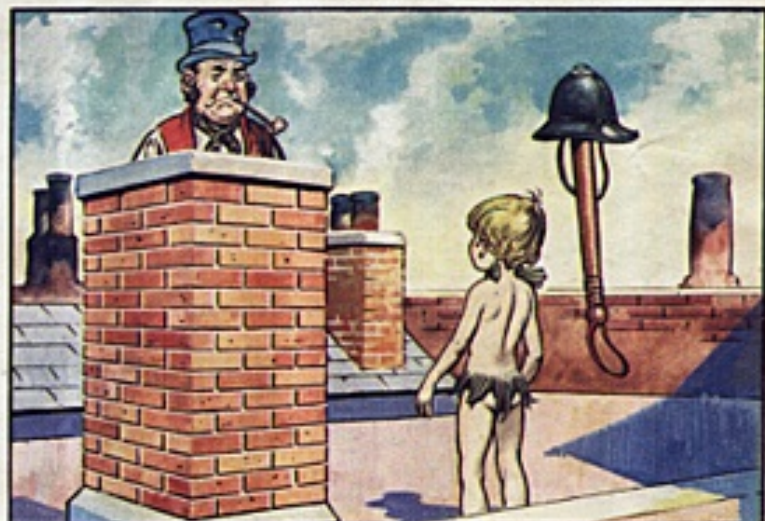


2. When they came up to the closed door the truncheon knocked on it twice with his own head. The door opened and out looked a tremendous old brass blunderbuss, who was the porter. Tom started back at little at the sight of him. "What case is this?" asked the blunderbuss in a deep voice out of his broad bell-mouth. "If you please, sir, it is no case," replied the truncheon.

3. "It is only a young gentleman from her ladyship, Mother Carey. He wants to see Grimes, the sweep." "Grimes?" said the blunderbuss. "Grimes is up in chimney number 345, so the young gentleman had better go on to the roof." "How do I get up there?" asked Tom, looking up at the wall which seemed miles and miles high. But in a moment the truncheon settled that little matter.



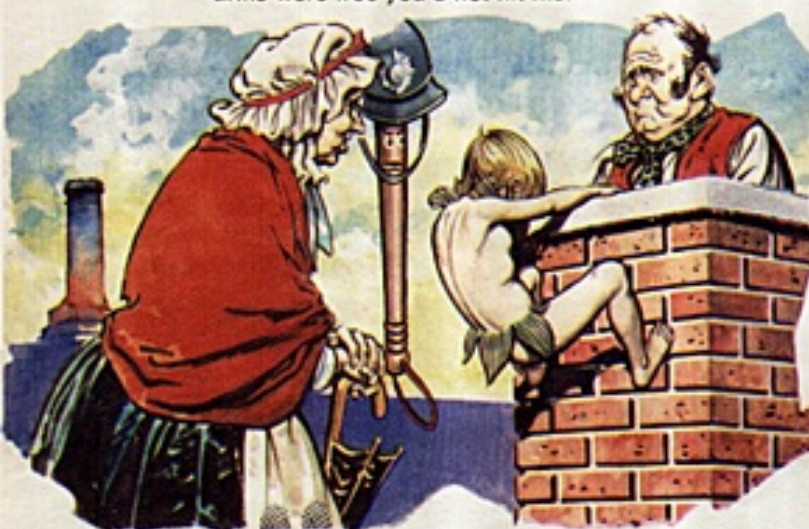
4. It whisked round and gave Tom such a powerful push that it sent him up to the roof in no time. "Come along," the truncheon said. "But it will be of no use. Grimes is the most hard-hearted fellow we have in charge. He thinks about nothing but beer and pipes, which are not allowed here, of course." They walked along over the flat roof through the many smoky and sooty-looking chimneys.



5. At last they came to chimney number 345. Out of the top of it, with his head and shoulders just showing, stuck poor Mr. Grimes. He was so sooty and ugly that Tom could hardly bear to look at him. In his mouth was a pipe, but it was not alight, though he was puffing at it with all his might. "Why, it's Tom," he said. "Have you come to laugh at me?"



6. "Keep a civil tongue in your head," said the truncheon, and it popped up just like Punch, hitting Grimes such a crack over the head with itself that his brains rattled. He tried to get his hands out to rub the place but he could not, for they were stuck fast in the chimney. "Everything's all my fault," grumbled Grimes. "But if my arms were free you'd not hit me."



8. "You may try, of course," said the ugly fairy. Tom tugged and pulled at the bricks of the chimney but he could not move one. "You had best leave me alone," said Grimes. "You're a good-natured and forgiving little chap and that's the truth, but you'd best be off. I'm sorry for all the nasty things I've done in my life, but it's too late now." "It is never too late," said the strange fairy.



7. "Can't I help him to get out of this chimney?" asked Tom. "Perhaps!" answered a solemn voice from behind Tom. He turned round and suddenly saw Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did. When the truncheon saw her it stood bolt upright — Attention! — and Tom made a low bow. "Oh, Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did," said Tom. "Please may I do something to help poor old Mr. Grimes?"



9. She was right. For as poor Grimes cried and blubbered, his own tears did what Tom had not the strength to do. They washed the mortar away from between the bricks and the chimney began to crumble down. Seeing that Grimes was likely to get out of it the truncheon jumped up and was going to hit him on the head with a thump, when Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did stopped it.



10. "Will you obey me if I give you a chance?" the strange fairy asked Grimes. "As you please, ma'am," said Grimes. "You're stronger and wiser than me. I'll do whatever your ladyship says." Grimes stepped out of the chimney and for once he looked as clean and respectable as a master-sweep should look.

11. "Take him away," said the fairy to the truncheon. "Give him a useful job to do. Get him to sweep out the crater of Mount Etna." Tom looked a little puzzled. Because he had never been to school to learn about anything he did not know at the time that Mount Etna was a large volcano in the island of Sicily.

Next week, this lovely tale comes to an end and you will see what happens to brave little Tom.

The Water Babies

Since becoming a water baby, Tom, the brave little chimney sweep, goes to a prison at the Other-end-of-Nowhere and sets free his cruel old master, Mr. Grimes. Promising to be good and kind in future, Grimes is sent off on a job, to sweep the crater of Mount Etna . . .



1. Looking very meek, Mr. Grimes let the police truncheon march him off to do the job chosen for him by Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did. Tom waved goodbye to his old master, and for all anyone knows, or does not know, Grimes is still sweeping the crater of Mount Etna to this very day. Sometimes, the volcano gets choked up with too many red-hot cinders and throws them out in showers. Then Mr. Grimes has to work twice as hard to sweep the crater clean before it covers the island of Sicily with ashes.



2. "Now," smiled the fairy to Tom, "your work here is done. You may as well go back again, but I must bandage your eyes first." Tom stood quite still and let the strange fairy blindfold his eyes with a handkerchief. He did not feel the least bit alarmed about it.

3. Nor was Tom very surprised by what happened next. In the world of the water babies so many things had taken place that he had ceased to wonder at the magic of them. With one hand Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did tied the handkerchief around his eyes and with the other she took it off. "Now you are safe," she said. It seemed to Tom that he had not moved a single step, but when he opened his eyes and looked round him, he knew that he was back again on the bottom of the sea close to Saint Brandan's Isle.



4. Tom walked out of the sea and up the gently-sloping beach. The first things he saw were the cliffs of Saint Brandan's Isle, standing high and sharp against the rosy dawn. The wind sang softly in the rocks and water sang among the caves.

5. The seabirds also sang as they streamed out into the ocean, but among the songs one came across the water more sweet and clear than the others. It was the song of a young girl's voice and it was the sweetest sound that Tom had ever heard.



6. Tom hurried to find out who was singing, and there upon a rock sat the most graceful creature that was ever seen. When Tom came near she looked up and, behold, it was Ellie, the girl Tom had seen in Harthover House when he had been sweeping the chimneys. "Oh, Miss Ellie," said Tom. "Oh, Tom," she said, "I thought you were never coming."



7. Tom looked at Ellie and Ellie looked at Tom. They might have stood like that for years, if a voice had not said to them, "Attention, children. Are you never going to look at me again?" There stood the ugly fairy. "Oh!" exclaimed Ellie. "You are our Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did." "Am I?" said the fairy. "Take another close look at me, children."



8. As if by magic, the ugly fairy seemed to change. "Now you are Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by," said Tom. "You have grown quite beautiful now." Tom opened his mouth in wonder. The ugly fairy, Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did, and the lovely fairy, Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by, were supposed to be sisters, so how could they be just one person? "I cannot make it out at all," he said.



9. "Now look again," the fairy said. And once more there was a magic change. "Now you are Mother Carey," said Tom. "We met when I swam under the Shiny Wall into the pool where the good old whales go to be made young again. It was you who told me the way to the Other-end-of-Nowhere, and it was there that I found my old master, Mr. Grimes."



10. "Look again," the fairy said. "Who am I now?" "You are now the gipsy woman who met me the day I went to sweep the chimneys at Harthover House," said Tom. Smiling, she turned to Ellie. "You may take him home with you now," she said. "Tom has become good by helping Mr. Grimes."



11. Did Tom marry Ellie? Nobody really knows. This is all a fairy-tale and in fairy-tales it is usually only princes and princesses who marry. But Tom and Ellie were so kind and so good that there is no reason to think that they should not be the equals of a prince and princess. Is there? All we know is that they were very happy.

Another lovely story called "The Tinder Box" starts next week in Once Upon A Time.

